

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

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1. A data structure suitable for use in collecting, distributing or storing product data for use in a catalog, the data structure being based on a data model having one or more classes, wherein each of the classes has one or more associated categories, the data structure being embodied in a computer readable medium and comprising:
 - at least one class definition, each class definition being arranged to identify one or more associated categories;
 - a plurality of category definitions, each category definition being arranged to identify an associated attribute group; and
 - a plurality of attribute group definitions, each attribute group definition being arranged to identify one or more attributes that are associated with the attribute group, each attribute having an associated possible value list that identifies values that are selectable as values for the associated attribute.
 2. The data structure as recited in claim 1, further including a plurality of possible unit lists, each possible unit list being arranged to identify units that are selectable as units for an associated one of the attributes.
 3. The data structure as recited in claim 2, wherein each one of the values in the possible value list is combined with each one of the units in the associated possible unit list for one of the attributes to create a possible value-unit combination, and wherein each possible value-unit combination is assigned a normalized value.
 4. The data structure as recited in claim 1, wherein each attribute is associated with a multi-value indicator that indicates that more than one of the values in the associated possible value list are selectable when the multi-value indicator is in a predefined state.
 5. The data structure as recited in claim 1, wherein each of the attributes is associated with a data capture priority indicator that assigns priorities to at least some

of the one or more attributes for capture.

6. The data structure as recited in claim 1, further including:
a possible countries table specifying one or more countries that are selectable
as countries for which a product is adapted for sale.

7. The data structure as recited in claim 1, further including:
a possible compatibility table including one or more platforms that are
selectable as platforms that are compatible with a specific product.

8. A data structure suitable for use in collecting, distributing, or storing product
data for a plurality of products, the product data being suitable for use in a catalog, the
products being classified according to a data model having one or more classes,
wherein each of the classes is arranged to identify one or more associated categories
and each of the categories is arranged to identify an associated attribute group having
one or more attributes, each attribute having an associated possible value list that
identifies values that are selectable as values for the associated attribute, the data
structure being embodied in a computer readable medium and comprising:

a plurality of system SKUs, each system SKU being arranged to identify one
of the plurality of products;

a plurality of manufacturer SKUs, each manufacturer SKU being associated
with one of the plurality of system SKUs; and

an attribute table in which selected attributes for each of the products are
stored, each of the selected attributes being identified by the corresponding system
SKU and having at least one of the values in the associated possible value list.

9. The data structure as recited in claim 8, wherein each attribute has an
associated possible unit list that identifies units that are selectable as units for the
associated attribute, wherein at least some of the selected attributes in the attribute
table have an associated one of the units in the associated possible unit list, wherein
each attribute value and associated unit is assigned a normalized value.

10. The data structure as recited in claim 8, further including:

a customer mapping table that maps each system SKU to a customer SKU assigned to the corresponding product by a particular customer.

11. The data structure as recited in claim 8, further including:

a category identifier associated with each one of the plurality of products, the category identifier being arranged to identify the category associated with the corresponding product.

12. The data structure as recited in claim 8, further including:

a manufacturer product description associated with each one of the plurality of products, the manufacturer product description describing standard features of the associated product.

13. The data structure as recited in claim 8, further including:

an image table including a link to one or more images illustrating the plurality of products.

14. The data structure as recited in claim 8, further including:

a marketing description for selected ones of the plurality of products.

15. The data structure as recited in claim 8, further including:

a country table specifying one or more countries for which each product is adapted for sale.

16. The data structure as recited in claim 8, further including:

a related products table that indicates one or more related products associated with each one of the plurality of products.

17. The data structure as recited in claim 8, further including:

a product compatibility table including platform compatibility information associated with each product.